

VZCZCXRO5886  
PP RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN  
DE RUEHKI #0689/01 2341533  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 211533Z AUG 08  
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8327  
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE  
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000689

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#) [BE](#)  
SUBJECT: GOMA ROUND-UP AUGUST 19

REF: KINSHASA 664

¶1. (SBU) EU representative Veronique Aulagnon told Goma PolOff August 19 that EU envoy Roeland van de Geer planned to attend the September 1 meeting of the Joint Monitoring Group in Kinshasa. He planned to travel first to Kigali, to meet Sezibera August 27, and then to Goma on August 28. Van de Geer had spoken with Tim Shortley and had hoped to meet up with him in Goma, but van de Geer would not be able to travel to Goma after Kinshasa as he had to attend a meeting of the Great Lakes Forum.

¶2. (SBU) Nkunda's status: Goma PolOff met M'hand Ladjouzi, MONUC PolOff (protect), and asked about Nkunda's status, in the wake of CNDP's refusal to meet van de Geer several weeks ago. Ladjouzi said that he got a return call from Nkunda in the past few days, so Nkunda is certainly still around. Ladjouzi alluded to swirling speculation about Nkunda's health (in fact, in recent meetings he had looked fatigued and his face spotted) and political-military discord within the organization (likely true, especially following the issuance of a warrant for Jean Bosco), but he discounted that the blockage occurred because of confused signals within the CNDP. He believed Nkunda was angry with the international facilitation which he perceived has abandoned him in favor of the government, which was attempting to gain through the Amani process what it had failed to achieve on the battlefield.

¶3. (SBU) Meeting of Joint Commission Plenary: At a subsequent meeting with the full team, Ladjouzi said the "Bureau Executive" of the Peace/Security Joint Commission had met August 18 (Note: "The Bureau" included General Etumba, Ladjouzi in place of Alpha Sow who is accompanying Alan Doss on a visit to the Kivus, and CNDP's Rene Abandi as permanent secretary. Endnote) They agreed to a plenary on August 26, with the agenda of formally presenting the four reports drafted without the CNDP at the sub-committee level and the ad hoc report of the working group on restoration of state authority (reftel). Abandi said that there could also be discussion at the plenary of a fuller disengagement (pull-back of forces), as long as it was disengagement with weapons retained. The meeting began testily, with Etumba and Abandi criticizing each other hotly, but the tenor improved.

¶4. (SBU) Members of the International Facilitation debated whether the plenary would do more harm than good, and agreed if it could not be further postponed (noting that Interior Minister Denis Kalume had insisted at the recent Steering Committee meeting in Goma that the plenary must take place at once), then it would be important to prepare the way in advance with Etumba and the CNDP. Ladjouzi noted that Etumba had departed for Kinshasa and would not return to Goma before Saturday, August 23. Some team members encountered CNDP local representative Bertrand Basimwa after the meeting (he was at MONUC for a meeting with Alan Doss, who had traveled overland to Masisi but failed to return as planned by helicopter due to poor weather), who said he and Abandi would need to get back to "their leadership" by Thursday to confirm strategy for the plenary and would then not be back in Goma before the plenary. (Note: The IF

team will try to get with CNDP tomorrow. The least bad scenario may be that CNDP complains at the plenary but agrees to some discussion of pull-back at Kimoka. End note).

15. (SBU) The IF team will meet Doss tomorrow (August 20) at 1800. UK rep Tom Pravda offered to do a draft of priorities for the discussion. He proposed (1) demilitarization of the Haut Plateau in South Kivu, (2) North Kivu disengagement (pull back), and (3) DDR for peripheral armed groups. Ladjouzi objected to the last as worthy but unattainable at present due to disinterest on the part of the government and unavailability of donor resources. Aulagnon said it was key to get on with the High Plateau since the FRF (Forces republicaines federalistes) had been coaxed into beginning to be amenable. MONUC PolOff Phil Winter noted that Doss was keen on proceeding with work on the road from Fizi to the Haut Plateau, while he said that Alpha Sow (formerly head of office in Bukavu) had strongly remonstrated with Doss (which is not characteristic of Sow) that people in South Kivu would see undue preference given to the Banyamulenge. Doss had agreed that "equal preference" should be given to the road from Bukavu toward Kisangani via Hongo (much more important to most people in South Kivu). Meanwhile, according to Willet Weeks, consultant to the Amani Program Coordinator, Malu Malu has taken a particular interest in a third corridor, to Shabunda (direction Kindu), apparently due to interior mineral resources and FDLR presence. Weeks added that it was important for the team to raise with Doss the absence of an effective or open ceasefire-monitoring mechanism.

16. (SBU) Ceasefire incident: Winter said that the North Kivu Brigade had reported earlier in the day an incident August 17 just northwest of the old JTN plantation, 15 kilometers northwest of

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Kitchanga. FARDC from the north opened fire from long range on CNDP elements from the south reportedly within the so-called "exclusion zone" and the CNDP returned fire. The NK Brigade said it intervened at once, stopped the exchange of fire, and a meeting would be held at JTN among the parties to discuss. Two children suffered minor injuries. (Note: It appears that the NK Brigade is doing some key monitoring in at least the sensitive JTN area. End note).

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